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A
S E R M O N

WRITTEN BY PARTICULAR DESIRE,
AND INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN PREACHED
AT THE
OPENING OF THE ORGAN
IN
ALL SAINTS CHURCH, HUNTINGDON:

— SED VETUERE PATRES.

— QUOD NON POTUERE VETARE,

EDIDIT

CAROLUS DICKENS,

FOR THE

BENEFIT OF THE ORGANIST,
WHO HAS NO FIXED SALARY.

— *valeat, quantum valere potest!*

C A M B R I D G E,

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PSALM xcv. 1, 2, 3.

O COME, LET US SING UNTO THE LORD; LET US HEARTILY
REJOICE IN THE STRENGTH OF OUR SALVATION.

LET US COME BEFORE HIS PRESENCE WITH THANKSGIVING;
AND SHEW OURSELVES GLAD IN HIM WITH PSALMS.

FOR THE LORD IS A GREAT GOD; AND A GREAT KING
ABOVE ALL GODS.

MEN and Brethren — Here I am, for I was verily and indeed called by invitation from your own Minister — who very lately himself hath trodden the way before me, on a like occasion: — and much honour I esteem it, to be even permitted to appear this Day, and on this particularly joyful Solemnity: — not indeed, (be ye assured,) as a Chaldean Messenger, or Herald, to cry aloud; and spare not — That, to you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages — That, at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp,

harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of Music, — ye do fall down and worship the golden Image which Nebuchadnezzar the King, or any other Potentate on Earth, hath set up — That ye bow down stupidly to the Stump of a Tree — That ye prostrate yourselves with Africans or Persians, to worship the Host of Heaven — the Angels of it, or any Spirits of just men made perfect therein — with the Lybians, the Sun and Moon — the Thebans, Sheep and Weefels — the Babylonians of Memphis, a Whale; the Inhabitants of Mendes, a Goat; the Thessalians, a Stork; the Syrophenicians, Doves; the Egyptians, Dogs, Cats, Crocodiles, and Hawks: — nay, which is more ridiculous, Leeks, Onions, and Garlick; — of whom, one of the old Poets hath facetiously said —

*O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis
Numina!*

what is thus freely interpreted —

*Religious Nations sure, and blest Abodes,
Where ev'ry Orchard is o'er-run with Gods!*

But with Shadrac, Meshac, and Abednego — those Servants of the true God — We do All worship and adore Him (and Him alone,) of whom cometh our Health — who is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords — a great God, and a great King above all Gods; — Against whom Nebuchadnezzar too himself, that mighty heathen prince, was at length constrained to make a Decree in his Kingdom — That every people, nation, and language, which spake any thing amiss, should be cut to pieces, and their Houses should be made a Dunghill: — For there was no other God He found, in all the World, that could deliver after that sort, but Him, who saved Daniel from the Lions — and those
three

three persons Shadrac, Meshac, Abednego — the Servants of the high God, from his fiery Furnace — upon whose bodies it had no power — nor was an hair of their Heads singed — neither were their coats changed — nor the smell of fire had passed on them; — whom finally He promoted in the province of Babylon — as God verily, will his people every where, that fear Him — to love Him — to keep his Commandments.

To this good end therefore, and the more effectually at all times to work upon you, to woo you, to win you to become feelingly fit worshippers of God both in spirit and in truth; to beseech you to be reconciled, especially upon this joyful and exhilarating occasion, to adore him, to praise him, and speak good of his name — (as to serve him truly all the days of your life) I have selected purposely, and made choice of the above noble exhortation, just read unto you, of the divine Lyrist or Harper, King David, whom the Lord graciously remembered, and all his troubles — That he became a man after his own heart, from being one of real sorrows, and acquainted with grief — who yet patiently acknowledged it was good for him that he had been afflicted; — for before he was so, he went wrong — but now would be occupied in the divine commandments; — as for us too, it will be good, if we repent — are converted, to turn to God — and do works meet for repentance: — Since the Hand-writing that may be against us [not Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin, as formerly on the Wall, to alarm and terrify Belshazzar in his impious Feast] shall be wiped out — and our sins, and our iniquities will He remember no more; but will hide his face from them, and put out all our misdeeds — blotting out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that shall be against us.

O, come then, let us repeat with David, this exhilarating exhortation of joy and gladness, in his courts!

O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation!

LET us come before his presence with thanksgiving; and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms!

FOR the Lord is a great God; and a great King above all gods — Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent, to do whatsoever pleaseth him in all places; in heaven above, in the earth beneath, and in the broad seas — who can, and hath smote divers kings — as Sehon, king of the Amorites — and Og, the king of Basan; — yea, and slew mighty kings; — who will avenge his people, and be gracious unto his servants; — for his mercy endureth for ever: — whilst the Images of the Heathen (Nebuchadnezzar, his as impious son Belshazzar, and others) are all dumb Idols, that neither speak, hear, see, nor understand; neither is there any breath in their mouths. — They that make them, are like unto them — and so are all They that put their trust in them to praise them as gods of gold, of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone: — whilst in the Lord Jehovah, is everlasting strength; — for He made the Heavens which are his Throne — as the Earth is his Footstool: — He is high above all Heathen — and his Glory above the Heavens.

He bringeth them down that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; He layeth it low, even to the ground — He
bringeth

bringeth it even to the dust. — The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy; — for the poor shall not always be forgotten: — yet, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, He hath saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour — for by grace we are saved, through Faith; and that, not of ourselves — it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.

Not unto us therefore, not unto us — but unto thy Name, O Lord, be the praise; for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake — who shalt bless them that fear thee, both small and great; and shalt encrease us more and more — us, and our children: — whose property is always to have mercy — whose the whole Heavens are — and the Earth hast Thou given to the children of men — who should therefore praise thee, worship thee, and sing of thee now, henceforth, and for evermore, in thy goodness toward them — thy wonders, thy noble acts, and according to thine excellent greatness — in the sound of the trumpet, upon the lute and harp — upon the strings and pipe — upon the well-tuned cymbals, and upon the loud cymbals — particularly on this occasion, with the deep solemn Organ, that majestic Instrument Here erected to remain continually (without prostitution,) for that very Thing; — to sound forth breathingly, yet loudly thy praise, thine honour, and thy glory in the Church, where we are gathered together to acknowledge thee, to magnify thee, and to bless thee, in whom alone we live, move, and have our Being: — for we are all fearfully and wonderfully made; — but Thou art He, who tookest us out of our mother's womb: —
on

on thee was our Trust, whilst we hanged yet our at Mothers' breasts: — Thou hast always been mindful of us — Thou hast pleasure in thy people, and helpest the meek-hearted — who will be avenged of the Heathen, to bind their Kings in chains, and their Nobles with links of iron — to be avenged of them as it is written — For such honour have all his Saints.

WHAT greater encouragement then, my Brethren, what surer reliance, what safer confidence may we hope for — (though there be none on men, nor on earthly princes) — than we find to be in Him, who will not leave us, nor forsake us — to be good, and godly? to become Doers, as well as Hearers of his Word? to be frequenters of his Tabernacle? to have clean Hands, and pure Hearts, continually before Him? and whenever especially we go unto, and approach his Altars, to wash them in innocency — and fall low on our knees before his Footstool — to take Christ's easy Yoke upon us, if we labour, and are heavy laden, to have rest from our sins? for his Yoke is easy, and his Burden light: — who, if He be the Door, if He be that strait Gate, and narrow Way to some — if Heaven yet be open to all men — it is through that Gate, and by that Way only — That any Entrance finally shall be given, shall be administered into it, to any Christian — any rational Disciple and follower of Him the blessed Jesus; — since God verily, dealeth with us, as such; — and by our works shall we be justified, and by our works shall we be condemned: — They that have done evil, shall go into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

SEEING then that things are so — and are they not so? — knowing what conditions, what easy ones surely, are imposed
on

on us Christians — what it is we must do to be saved — that we are thus to behave ourselves — are to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God to all well-pleasing — who is more solicitous and watchful we must believe, from all public manners — all open transactions with mankind, who are daily, if not injuring — deceiving, and are deceived — to have hardly any good faith upon the earth — More watchful I say, is He for our happiness, our felicity, our real benefit — than we are ourselves: — And it is well, if some of us, enlightened and reformed as we All pretend to be in these latter Ages of Christianity, are not too like those St. Paul warned Timothy of — who in Ephesus, (where he was ordained over them, to be instant in season, and out of season) — were men, that were lovers of their own selves — covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy — without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good — traitors, heady, high-minded — lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God — Who yet is merciful to the worst of us, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us conditionally, from all unrighteousness — not willing the death of any sinners — but rather that we should repent, and live: — trying all imaginable and other methods, to bring us to Him — to forsake our wickedness, to be sorry for it — and do works meet for repentance — alluring us by his goodness, and charming us through his mercy; — when, if these motives fail — (by the denunciations of his wrath to awe us into obedience) — He at length, sometimes bareth his arm for his strange work — and has been known at least to — (and may again) — send his severe Judgements into the world, that the inhabitants thereof may learn righteousness — may fear and tremble for their transgressions, lest their iniquity become their ruin,

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FOR,

For, though God made man upright, they have yet sought out many naughty inventions to their injury, their hurt, and eternal misery; — who have been permitted (and very justly) for their notorious offences, to be deceived — insomuch that they should believe a Lye — That they all might be damned, who believed not in the Truth — but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

God however, who seeth our daily wickednesses — who is so continually provoked by them — if He yet vouchsafeth to us his mercy — nor the Tower in Siloam hath yet fallen upon us — if his love be extended to all — if he sendeth rain on the just and unjust — if he affordeth us fruitful seasons — if he filleth our hearts with food and gladness — can we ever be so unmindful as to forget Him? or in the least unthankful in not making some return not only of our Lips, but in our Lives — by being merciful, and doing good to those our fellow Christians, and fellow-creatures who are in need, or suffer wrong — who are grieved and afflicted, it may be, in mind, body, or estate — and cannot without our assistance, be delivered?

If God's greatest enemies are partakers of his bounty, of his kindness and liberality — We should All go, and do likewise to one another — should cast our bread upon the waters to those that hate us; for we shall find it after many days: and by heaping coals of fire on their heads — not to burn and consume them — we may melt them into love and good-will towards us: — But if God be slow to anger, and ready to forgive repeated injuries and provocations — what an impious boldness must it be in us to pursue his, or even our own enemies with hatred and revenge, when his arms are open to receive sinners?

NOR

NOR should we here forget the rare, the inviting, fair example of his Son — who, during his abode on earth, literally copied after his heavenly Father's patience, long-suffering, mercy, forbearance, and forgiveness in all his actions — who, though he left the Glories of Eternity for us men, and for our Salvation — was despised and rejected of men — became a man of sorrow, and was acquainted with grief — yet readily forgave All; — and even prayed for his bitterest, his most cruel enemies and persecutors, under the severest agonies of his sufferings; kindly offering up intercession for them, that they might be excused, or their guilt at least extenuated, for the favourable reason he assigned, and urged — That, they knew not what they did.

HEREIN then hath he set us an example, that we should go, and do likewise — That we should All follow his steps, by whose stripes we are healed — for whose sake alone, if we endure patiently unto the end, till our change come, we shall by his grace and favour, be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites.

AND if ye are delighted Here, to feel any antetaste of those comforts, those joys, those pleasures that are above at God's right hand, for evermore in Heaven — the future Jerusalem — the City of the great King — which arise from all we know that they enjoy There, who are gone before us, and are arrived in those divine mansions of bliss and happiness — their love to one another, their mutual harmony, their songs of praise, and exaltations, their unwearied and unwearying hallelujahs to the Lord God of Sabbaoth — who was, and is, and is to come — the same yesterday, to day, and for ever — to the Lamb of God, our Redeemer — and to the holy Ghost, the Comforter —

those Three, which bear record in Heaven — that are One, that agree in one; — as there are Three that bear witness in Earth, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood — which agree also in One — Ye will hardly ever cease, surely, your adorations — your songs and praises with this noble Instrument of holy Worship and Thanksgiving — this deep-sounding Organ, that we are now opening — the Gift of many generous goodly Subscribers, whom the Divinity that stirs within them, hath moved to present voluntarily to this house of prayer — the holy place of the constant residence and abode with us, of those three beneficent gracious persons, but one almighty and ever-living God, who heareth prayer; and unto whom therefore, all flesh should come; whose eyes are over the righteous, and whose ears are ever open to hear, and receive their prayers — granting them in this world, knowledge of his truth — and in the world to come, life everlasting — But if your Heart condemn you, He is greater than your Heart, and knoweth all things.

WE may however, All be Hypocrites in the world — may deceive, as we are often deceived; — we may be of Them who creep into houses, which lead captive filly women — raw, un-experienced girls — or the more sordid female inhabitants of our greater Cities — our larger Market Towns throughout our Kingdoms: — Whilst the Lord's eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good; — being the true, the alone searcher of all our Hearts — that are as well open to Him, to look into, as our most public and notorious actions, or our very persons, when we sit alone mournfully complaining, like Sparrows upon the house top: — for as Cranes and as Swallows, so do we often chatter: — Wherefore, as our love should be without Dissimulation, as we should be true and just altogether in our several Deal-

Dealings towards others, (we would wish to be so towards us,) according to that heavenly prescribed rule — If we are at any time false to God, if we ever attempt to deceive Him, to mock Him, to impose upon Him, we shall meet with our reward; — shall literally be our worst enemies, to be the just cause and occasion of our own ruin, if not in this world, most assuredly in that which shall be hereafter — where finally, we shall All receive our portion with Hypocrites — the bitterest lot of sinners against God, their neighbours, and themselves, in that fiery Lake of Brimstone, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched — where there is no water to cool our tongues; and, if we wish to pass from thence, we cannot for the great Gulph that is between us, any more than the Rich man, who fared sumptuously every Day.

DARE then, my beloved Brethren, to play the men Here, while the Time is — that are true in all Things; — dare to be honest — dare to be seriously religious; — have Faith, have trust and confidence in God. — And, if ye praise Him with your lips — with trumpets also and shawms — praise Him in your lives too; — praise Him in your behaviour — praise Him in your actions. —

NEITHER let the charms of Melody, which are very great, which are powerful to sooth the savage breast, to soften rocks, to bend the knotted oaks — have other power over you, than to melt you into true Devotion, and real Love towards God, and towards man — towards all your respective Brethren and Fellow-Christians — towards all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, where-ever dispersed, or however distressed, throughout the world — constraining and compelling you fervently at all times, and upon all occasions, to adore and worship Him
and

and Him alone, of whom cometh our help: — But at no time, in no place, in no company — even in the midst of your loosest mirth, your most unguarded hours — and, especially Here before God, in the congregation, and seat of the Elders — whilst ye be sitting among the Doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions — Let it not, I beseech you, betray you into indifference, inattention, or carelessness to more serious matters, ye had better on all such occasions be employed in — and what is assuredly the duty, the proper business of all accountable dependant beings, from him that sitteth on a throne, to him that is clothed in a linen frock: — Since persons of every sect and denomination in the world — of every religion, and of every country — should fervently be occupied herein, as well for their benefit and advantage, as God's honour and glory — who is assembled with his people, especially in all places of holy Worship — to receive their praises, hear their prayers, and grant their petitions, in the name, and for the sake of Him, who came into the world for us men, and for our Salvation — to redeem us, to purify us, to sanctify us, to give us the Kingdom of Heaven, and everlasting Life.

MOREOVER, (in one word) — As it is the Duty of us All to pray continually, and without ceasing to God, for our daily bread — who is the Author, and Giver of all good Things — for a constant and regular, as well as daily supply of it to ourselves, and others; and for such necessities and conveniencies of this life, as are needful for us — (besides caring for our Souls, our better parts, which should be our chief concern) — So, if our petitions be not neglected, — if our prayers be heard — and, if we have food and raiment, we should be satisfied; our lives not consisting in the abundance of our possessions: — and we should All learn with an Apostle, in whatever state we are,
there-

therewith to be content; to know how to be abased, and how to abound; to be satisfied, to be contented.

WHETHER therefore we appear before God at any time — as we should verily, at all times for blessings to come — that may be hoped for us — that we may reasonably look for from our prayers — or for mercies vouchsafed, conferred graciously already on our minds, bodies, or estates — or on those of other people, our brethren in the world — as we may assuredly weep, and beg for ourselves herein — and should likewise be thankful for ourselves — so we may doubtless weep, and beg, and care for them that weep: — and should rejoice too with them that do, or have any reason, any just cause of rejoicing; which, in a good sense surely, may, (if it is said of the other) be said as truly of this parish, that has now met with so many kind Friends and Benefactors to encourage them, to help them, and assist them to be more frequently devout — more joyful and glad before God, on this Day particularly — and hereafter, (every sabbath one at least) in their own Church — so long as they live — by means of solemn music this Organ will afford, (through some serious, skilful performer, who will be highly deserving of a reward for it) to make them more composed, more thoughtful, and more in earnest probably, in their several and joint applications to the Throne of Grace — (if not to have more understanding in the way of godliness) — and more seemingly to worship the Deity in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs.

To conclude therefore — as I began with the words, the exhortation of the divine Lyrist or Harper — the man after God's own heart, according to the Scriptures: — let me once more entreat you, my beloved Brethren, before ye go hence,
before

before ye leave this house of Worship — this holy place of Prayer and Thanksgiving — That, ye again sing unto the Lord — that ye heartily rejoice in the strength of our Salvation — that, as we are assembled in his presence, as ye are now before Him with your several and united Thanksgivings, ye do shew yourselves glad in Him with psalms!

For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods.

AND NOW —

Arise, oh King of Kings! and disappoint
Their malice, who unmindful of their God,
Thy awful Majesty, thy Pow'r defy,
And bow the knee to Idols: — while we raise
Our voices high, and sing in notes divine
The endless Wonders of creative Pow'r —
Whilst we th' immortal Choir essay to join
In Hallelujahs to thine holy Name.

To which interesting and universally good petition, let all the people say, Amen!

